

Reducing Youth Barriers

Focusing on Youth Engagement

Youth are looking to give back more than ever before, and are excited about volunteering remotely, but struggle to find accessible virtual opportunities that align with their interests.

As non-profit leaders think about how to design online volunteer programs for youth during COVID-19 and beyond, they must consider the impact of their programming, from recognizing and removing barriers and meeting youth where they are, to creating new ways to engage and recruit.

Many organizations are benefiting from adjusting their programs and services to meet the need to provide meaningful and accessible ways for youth to get involved. Look for opportunities to enhance the youth volunteer experience at every stage in the volunteer management cycle. This may require changing outdated techniques, language and approaches.



Encouraging Youth to Volunteer

- ▶ Highlight the impact the volunteer role will make to your organization and the community
- ▶ Emphasize how youth will learn new and/or transferable skills
- ▶ Facilitate leadership growth to develop long-term engagement

Avoiding Barriers Affecting Youth

- ▶ Provide opportunities for youth to engage after school and on weekends; also be aware of and work around exam schedules by offering short-term volunteer commitments
- ▶ Evaluate your organization's budget to reduce or remove unnecessary costs required for youth to participate in volunteer activities
- ▶ Develop short, clear and manageable volunteer applications. The less paperwork the better and digital is best
- ▶ Ensure that indicating an age limit on your volunteer role descriptions is necessary. If not always highlight that the role is suitable for youth
- ▶ Assumptions about youth volunteers may not be true and could lead to negative experiences. Ask and clarify when in doubt.

Onboarding Youth Volunteers

- ✓ Create engaging online training modules that can be completed over the course of the volunteers' first month at your organization, rather than overloading youth with information
- ✓ Design accessible systems to elicit volunteer feedback, such as leaving space to provide comments at the end of online training modules
- ✓ Develop safe digital communities or other online spaces for youth to socialize and meet fellow-volunteers and members of your organization's staff team

Access the Playbook for Youth Virtual Engagement

Volunteer
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